

CLAIMS

1. A pallet truck comprising:
 - a power unit;
 - a steering unit coupled to said power unit;
 - a set of forks coupled to said power unit; and
 - said power unit including a main casing for housing drive apparatus and a platform onto which an operator may step and ride while controlling the truck, said casing including at least one substantially rigid wall member and an operator support pad associated with said wall member, said support pad comprising a main body including ribs.
2. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 1, wherein said support pad main body comprises inner and outer surfaces, said inner surface being positioned adjacent said casing rigid wall member and said outer surface being visible by said operator, said ribs comprising a set of flexible first ribs formed in at least a first portion of said pad main body, said first ribs being capable of flexing to absorb and attenuate forces received from an operator's body contacting said operator support pad.
3. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 2, wherein said first ribs extend outwardly from said pad main body outer surface.
4. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 3, wherein said ribs further comprise a set of second ribs formed in at least a second portion of said pad main body.
5. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 4, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is substantially separate from said second portion of said pad main body.
6. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 4, wherein said pad main body second portion

comprises a plurality of recesses, said second ribs being defined between said recesses, said second ribs and said recesses being adapted to absorb and attenuate forces received by said second portion of said pad main body from said operator's body.

7. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 6, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is spaced a distance away from said wall member when a force is not being applied to said pad main body first portion such that a pocket is defined behind said first portion, and said main body first portion being capable of deforming inwardly toward said wall member when a force is applied thereto.
8. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 7, wherein said pad main body second portion substantially surrounds at least a part of said first portion, at least one of said recesses formed in said main body second portion extending into said main body first portion for communicating with said pocket so as to allow air to move into and out of said pocket as forces are applied to and removed from said pad main body first portion.
9. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 4, wherein said first and second ribs are formed from a polymeric material.
10. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 9, wherein said polymeric material comprises a non-foamed material.
11. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 1, wherein said support pad is positioned so as to be at substantially the same level as a knee of the operator.
12. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 1, wherein said operator support pad is integrally incorporated into a polymeric material shroud covering at least a portion of said wall member.

13. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 12, wherein said wall member comprises substantially vertical and horizontal sections, and said shroud comprising an insulation member for preventing at least a portion of thermal and acoustic energy passing through the vertical and horizontal sections of said wall member from reaching the operator.

14. A pallet truck comprising:

a power unit;

a steering unit coupled to said power unit;

a set of forks coupled to said power unit; and

said power unit including a main casing for housing drive apparatus and a platform onto which an operator may step and ride while controlling the truck, said casing including at least one substantially rigid wall member and a shroud covering at least a portion of said wall member, said shroud including an operator support pad comprising a main body.

15. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 14, wherein said support pad is positioned so as to be at substantially the same level as a knee of an operator.

16. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 14, wherein said operator support pad is integrally incorporated into said shroud.

17. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 14, wherein said operator support pad main body comprises ribs.

18. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 17, wherein said support pad main body comprises inner and outer surfaces, said inner surface being positioned adjacent said casing rigid wall member and said outer surface being visible by said operator, said ribs comprising a set of flexible first ribs formed in at least a first portion of said pad main body, said set of flexible ribs being capable of flexing to absorb and attenuate forces received from an operator's body

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contacting said operator support pad.

19. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 18, wherein said first ribs extend outwardly from said pad main body outer surface.

20. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 19, wherein said ribs further comprise a set of second ribs formed in at least a second portion of said pad main body.

21. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 20, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is substantially separate from said second portion of said pad main body.

22. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 21, wherein said pad main body second portion comprises a plurality of recesses, said second ribs being defined between said recesses, said second ribs and said recesses being adapted to absorb and attenuate forces received by said second portion of said pad main body from said operator's body.

23. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 22, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is spaced a distance away from said wall member when a force is not being applied to said pad main body first portion such that a pocket is defined behind said first portion, and said main body first portion being capable of deforming inwardly toward said wall member when a force is applied thereto.

24. A pallet truck as set forth in claim 23, where said pad main body second portion substantially surrounds at least a part of said first portion, at least one of said recesses formed in said main body second portion extending into said main body first portion for communicating with said pocket so as to allow air to move into and out of said pocket as forces are applied to and removed from said pad main body first portion.

25. A shroud for covering at least a portion of a vehicle wall member, said shroud including an operator support pad comprising a main body.

26. A shroud as set forth in claim 25, wherein said operator support pad main body comprises ribs.

27. A shroud as set forth in claim 26, wherein said support pad main body comprises inner and outer surfaces, said inner surface being positioned adjacent said wall member and said outer surface being visible by said operator, said ribs comprising a set of flexible first ribs formed in at least a first portion of said pad main body, said set of flexible ribs being capable of flexing to absorb and attenuate forces received from an operator's body contacting said operator support pad.

28. A shroud as set forth in claim 27, wherein said first ribs extend outwardly from said pad main body outer surface.

29. A shroud as set forth in claim 28, wherein said ribs further comprise a set of second ribs formed in at least a second portion of said pad main body.

30. A shroud as set forth in claim 29, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is substantially separate from said second portion of said pad main body.

31. A shroud as set forth in claim 29, wherein said pad main body second portion comprises a plurality of recesses, said second ribs being defined between said recesses, said second ribs and said recesses being adapted to absorb and attenuating forces received by said second portion of said pad main body from said operator's body.

32. A shroud as set forth in claim 31, wherein said first portion of said pad main body is

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spaced a distance away from said wall member when a force is not being applied to said pad main body first portion such that a pocket is defined behind said first portion, and said main body first portion being capable of deforming inwardly toward said wall member when a force is applied thereto.

33. A shroud as set forth in claim 32, where said pad main body second portion substantially surrounds at least a part of said first portion, at least one of said recesses formed in said main body second portion extending into said main body first portion for communicating with said pocket so as to allow air to move into and out of said pocket as forces are applied to and removed from said pad main body first portion.

34. A shroud as set forth in claim 25, wherein said shroud is formed from a non-foamed polymeric material.